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PP RUEHTRO  
DE RUEHRB #0750 2250731  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 120731Z AUG 08  
FM AMEMBASSY RABAT  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8984  
INFO RUEHAS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY 4877  
RUEHNK/AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT PRIORITY 3806  
RUEHTRO/AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI PRIORITY 0338  
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY 9702  
RUEHCL/AMCONSUL CASABLANCA PRIORITY 4269  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 1093

UNCLAS RABAT 000750

SIPDIS

STATE FOR IO/RHS - OSTERMEIER, DRL/MLGA, AND NEA/MAG

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PHUM UN MO

SUBJECT: DEMARCHE DELIVERED: URGING MOROCCO TO ACCEPT AN OHCHR REGIONAL OFFICE

REF: STATE 077748

¶1. PolCouns delivered reftel points to Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Chief of Staff Nasser Bourita on July 22. Bourita responded positively but noncommittally, saying that the Government of Morocco (GOM) supported the idea in principle but still had concerns about the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) stemming from what it perceived as Morocco's unfavorable treatment at the Universal Periodic Review session in Geneva on April 8 and during an OHCHR delegation visit to Morocco in 2006.

¶2. Bourita said the GOM was also sensitive to how questions on Western Sahara would be managed by the regional office if it was based in Rabat since the UN does not recognize Moroccan sovereignty over the territory, and the GOM strongly opposes the UN's treating Western Sahara as a separate entity.

¶3. PolOff followed up with Bourita on August 11, when the latter said that there had been "no evolution" in the GOM's thinking on the subject. Bourita reiterated the GOM's discomfort with its previous experiences with the OHCHR and said that it would have to consider the question over a longer period of time.

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<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/rabat>  
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Riley